

## KEY MESSAGES (DRAFT 5/17/01) UPPER COLUMBIA RIVER SITE INVESTIGATION

- Based on USGS studies in the early 1990's, we know that contamination is present in some upper Columbia River sediments. EPA is taking samples to learn more about the contamination and its sources.
- The site investigation is a screening step which will help determine whether further action by EPA or others is needed. (There are many types of further action including listing to the NPL, deferral to the state or Canada, non-Superfund site specific cleanup, risk assessment.)
- Sediment sampling started in May 2001 and should be completed by mid-summer. Results (compiled data?) Will be available by the end of the year.
- EPA, the Confederated Colville Tribes (CCT) and the Spokane Tribe of Indians share concern about the health of people in the upper Columbia River. The CCT petitioned EPA to conduct a site investigation in August 1999.
- We are working collaboratively with Canadian environmental agencies (*to control contamination sources north of the US-Canadian border*).
- When the site investigation is complete, the data will be shared with the public by a variety of methods, such as public meetings, fact sheets, and the EPA website.
- Public input is important to us. Project Managers and Community Involvement Coordinators are available to provide more information and discuss concerns. If formal cleanup action is warranted by EPA or the state, formal public comment procedures will be established.
- {From the flip chart: *We are not undertaking a study of risk of contamination we might find. That step will be taken if we find pollution above levels we have determined warrant further investigation. If cleanup of a specific place is needed, we will do a risk analysis to figure out how extensive a cleanup is needed*}. I morphed it into the bullet below, but I'm not sure if I captured the full intent of the statement: *The site investigation does not evaluate risk to people or wildlife. That step will be taken if we find levels of pollution warranting further study or cleanup.*
- The site investigation will help us find answers for things we don't know about contamination of sediments in the upper Columbia River. It is like a car making a funny noise. Until you have a mechanic look at it, you may not know if it is the muffler or the engine block.
- We want to make sure the upper Columbia River area is a safe place for people to live and visit.

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